

# Opportunities and constraints for civic and political engagement of young immigrants: the case of Angolans in Portugal

Norberto Ribeiro, Isabel Menezes & Tiago Neves

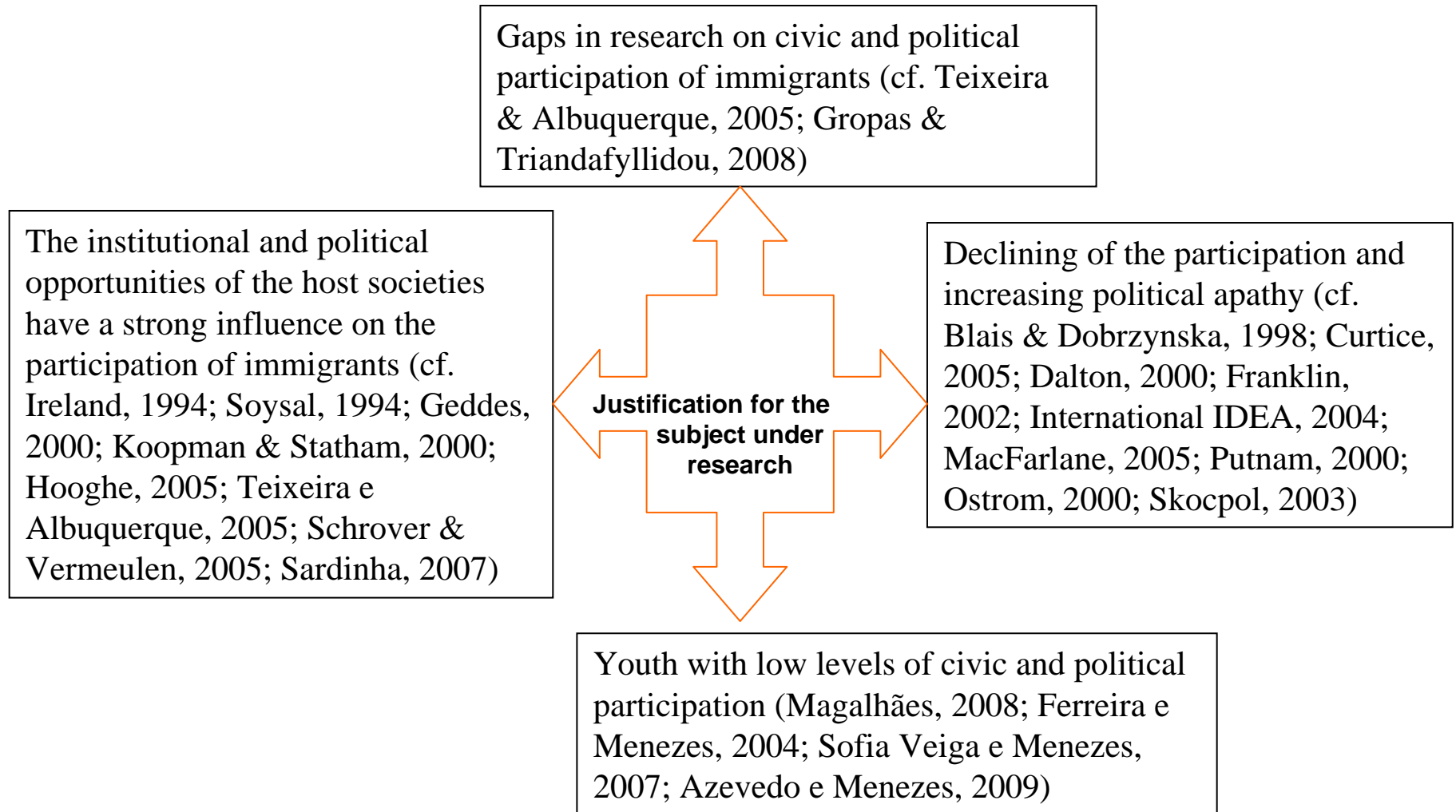
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# Contextualization...



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- The research reported in this presentation was supported by a grant received from the European Commission 7th Framework Programme, FP7-SSH-2007-1, Grant Agreement no: 225282, *Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation (PIDOP)* awarded to the University of Surrey (UK), University of Liège (Belgium), Masaryk University (Czech Republic), University of Jena (Germany), University of Bologna (Italy), University of Porto (Portugal), Örebro University (Sweden), Ankara University (Turkey) and Queen's University Belfast (UK).
- The main objective of the project refers to the understanding of psychological social and cultural processes that may inhibit or enhance the civic and political participation of young immigrants (in the Portuguese case, the groups will be: Angolans, Brazilians and Portuguese Indian origin)  

- The project will be based on *methodological pluralism* (Barker e Pistrang, 2005), combining qualitative and quantitative methods.
  - Focus group discussion (2 focus group);
  - In-depth interviews (5 interviews);
  - Documental analysis;
  - Questionnaires.

# Contextualize the present study

## Preliminary analysis (*objective*):

- the study contrasts the views of young people and leaders from immigrants associations on opportunities and constraints for civic and political involvement and participation.
- results will be discussed in terms of the way young people conceive their role as full-rights citizens and how they balance their multiple identities in assuming (or not) an active role as a citizen; additionally contrast young people's own vision with that of leaders from immigrants associations as they discuss active citizenship rights and their impact on young.

# Procedure for collecting information: Focus Group Discussion(FG)

## Features:

- Two focus group discussion with young Angolans, balanced in terms of gender;
- groups mainly constituted by students which, in parallel, work or have had work experience;
- with ages between 20 to 26 years old.

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# Procedure for collecting information :

## *Interviews with leaders from immigrants associations*

- Immigrant Solidarity Association (Associação Solidariedade Imigrante);
  - International Solidarity Association (Associação solidariedade Internacional);
  - International Amnesty (Amnistia Internacional);
  - SOS Racism (SOS Racismo);
  - Exaequo network (Rede Exaequo).
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# Young Immigrants views: *Focus Group* *characterization*

The script of the focus group discussion had the main objective to focus the discussion mainly to the following topics of interest :

- **Personal experiences** (which seeks to explore the experiences of participation of the participants (past and present), as well as their influences and sources of information);
  - **Importance of the participation of the young** (to address concepts of citizen / citizenship and opinions regarding opportunities for participation);
  - **Perceptions of social exclusion** (understand their perception of exclusion in relation to the specific group - immigrant - and participation);
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## Young Immigrants views: *opportunities and constraints*

### Regularities identified...

- Negative perceptions about the opportunities for participation (particularly in relation to perceptions of discrimination (racism and prejudice) which they consider still exist in Portuguese society.

*although they have*

- Positive perception of the opportunities when they compare the political systems and experience developed between the country of origin and the host country. However, most participants have the expectation of returning to the country of origin.
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## Young Immigrants views: *opportunities and constraints*

### Regularities identified...

- Low expectations of participation (do not identify themselves as Portuguese citizens and, as such the majority argue, that they have no interest in participating in civic and political society that does not regard it as yours).

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## **Leaders from immigrants associations views:** *opportunities and constraints*

### **Regularities identified...**

- **Emergence of new forms of participation (e.g.:, blogs, social networks, etc.), which constitute effective participation opportunities;**
  - **Immigration policies (at national and European level) more focused on social control of immigrants and, in particular of young immigrants, who in the effective promotion of their civic and political participation;**
  - **Stigmatizing and restrictive policies that focus (erroneously) in immigrant status, and not in a citizen status, as would be desirable.**
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# Contrasting their views...

- The perceptions of young immigrants appear to converge with the association leaders' perceptions regarding the lack of opportunities and the constraints that young immigrant experience in general to participate in Portuguese society.
  - However, consider that there are emerging forms of participation that enhance the opportunities, as well as when making socio-politics comparisons between countries, consider in spite of all that they have more opportunities in the host country.
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# Limitations...

- Preliminary nature of the analysis;
  - Group mostly composed by young students;
  - The fact that the scripts are not specifically designed to tackle the issues of opportunities and constraints for participation, but in more general objectives that stem from the larger project on which this study is a part.
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# Orientation...

- In the future this analysis will be deepened through the realization of more focus group with young immigrants from a lower age group; as well as by conducting more interviews with subjects of various social contexts (e.g.: parents, peer groups, media, etc.)., which will enable us to cross the various discourses involved promoting a more comprehensive and profound analysis about them in relation to the opportunities for participation.
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# Acknowledgement

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**Thank you for your attention**

**Norberto Ribeiro**  
**[norberto@fpce.up.pt](mailto:norberto@fpce.up.pt)**

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